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AUTHOR La Brack, Bruce
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ABSTRACT

Although more and more people are living in other cultures for extended periods and facing both culture shock in the new environment and re-entry into the old environment, little serious study has been conducted on how people readjust to their home environment after having lived in another culture. Only in the last decade have researchers begun to define and consider the problems of re-entry and reverse culture shock. This has occurred partly because re-entry has not been perceived as a problem and partly because in some cultures admission of difficulties with re-entry is seen as unpatriotic. In the research that has been conducted there are problems, principally overgeneralizations from the samples of Americans who have lived abroad. Little is known about how different types of societies or different levels of development affect the process or how observed changes among returnees differ from normal maturational processes. More rigorous research on readjustment is recommended as well as programs to aid in the transition back from life in a foreign culture. Thus far such programs have been far less common than ones preparing people to live abroad. Syllabi for two seminars designed for college students planning to live in foreign countries and returning home are also included. (IS)

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STATE OF THE ART RESEARCH ON RE-ENTRY

An essay on directions for the future

Dr. Bruce La Brack
Sociology
University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT: DO NOT QUOTE WITHOUT AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

A CONTEXT FOR RE-ENTRY

Confronting the 'Other'

The human race is a mobile lot. Since the dawn of hominids in the African savannas millions of years ago there have been continuous movements and relocations of populations in spite of geographic, oceanic, and social barriers. For that matter, the human being is unique among the planet's species in that it can live and work in any econiche, including sea bottoms and outer space. This flexibility and adaptability can be seen most clearly in the development of man's culture, his non-genetic response to both the physical and social environments around him. It is also clear that human beings have needed this ability to manipulate their cultural repitoire because getting along with new customs and peoples requires a measure of empathy and ability to mimic, if not personally embrace, different ways of doing things.

In the modern world this situation has gotten much more complicated and diverse. Technological advances have developed vehicles for our transport which give us the ability to travel to the most remote and exotic climates within one day. That this fact is taken for granted by many of the world's peoples in no way lessens the rapidity of the trip nor does it reduce the potential for mutual cultural shock. It is one thing to acquire what I term "television sophistication", attaining the impression that one is conversant with world cultures through armchair National Geographic ethnography, while it is quite another to actually interact on a daily basis in a culture substantially different from your own. For these and a multitude of other reasons, the studies of social scientists since the middle of the ninteenth century, until quite recently, have tended to give overwhelming attention to the problems created or intensified in the course of culture contact.

Acculturation Studies

These studies were generally divided into three major categories; the first

focusing on the effects of one culture dominating another, as in the case of Euro-American colonialism in Asia, Africa, or Latin America; the second concentrating on the process whereby nation-states attempted to absorb multi-cultural populations, such as Brazil, Panama, and North America; and the third was devoted to what are called "cultural survival" studies, mostly of tribal groups facing genocide or cultural extinction in the face of rapid culture change, such as Bushmen, Australian Aboriginees, native Americans in North America, and other relatively homogenous, technically-primitive populations.

In all cases the emphasis was largely upon the effects of forced culture change or predicated upon the premise that a significant degree of "assimilation" by immigrants was normally desirable, if not inevitable. It was a view based on the assumption that cultural influences tend to flow from the dominant top to the minority/tribal bottom. It often emphasized "systems" and "culture" interacting as parts of a hierarchial structural-functional model. There was little overt concern for the individual representative in this process because results were tabulated in aggregates or assessed along continua of degrees-of-assimilation and/or culture loss.

The Return to 'Normality'

On the individual level, the inter-cultural situation might result in a wide variety of adaptive modes ranging from total rejection of the host culture to the infamous "going native", but regardless of the quality of the overseas experience for most sojourners the period abroad was of finite duration. Whether colonial administrators, diplomats, students, or explorers, the return home was generally viewed as a much anticipated, foregone conclusion. Beyond the inevitable return to one's culture and kinsmen, the "going home" process seems not to have attracted much attention among scholarly observers until some twenty years ago.

It is interesting that a rich parallel commentary on the potential problems

of re-entry has existed for a very long time, but the accounts are to be found in gleaning world literature, poetry, journals of repatriated refugees, explorer's chronicles, military and diplomatic memoirs, and even the Bible[1]. These sporadic, idiosyncratic references to the difficulties encountered in trying to reassume one's old life patterns, or at least readjust to the customs and mores which then prevail upon return home, transcend categories of age, sex, religion, ethnicity, social class or caste, economic status, and educational background. That is not to conclude that these elements do not influence the nature of the experience and hence the perception of the individual regarding the success or failure of the foreign venture, but it does indicate that the process of re-entry has at least some separable and autonomous characteristics which transcend the particularistic experiences of returnees. To paraphrase the old saying, "On one level each re-entry experience is unique while on another level each is the same". Perhaps because what little attention there has been was directed to the unique personal level of returnee adjustment, the commonality and patterning of the process as a social event has been largely overlooked.

Re-Entry as a 'Universal'

Just as it appears that something universal happens to human beings who leave the familiarity and security of their own cultural settings to venture into alien physical and psychological territories, the evidence indicates that whatever identity shifts (or value alterations, or experiential skills are gained, etc.) which influence the cross-cultural experience of the sojourners do not disapppear upon coming home.[2] They continue to affect their ideas and responses upon their return. Unless totally compartmentalized, the flow of past events and accumulation of new knowledge almost inevitably combine in such a way that the returnee finds it necessary to give expression to feelings about culture, values, and behavior. The statements are often evaluative and comparative, centering on normative values and frequently are negative towards

their expectations, often varying sufficiently to cause dislocations, feelings of anxiety, isolation, and unease, which can lead to a temporary malaise or even an active rejection of things once coveted.

Until recently the subject matter of what have become known as re-entry or readjustment studies was seldom, if ever, examined seriously or considered a worthy subject for inquiry. The reasons for this are complex, but suffice it to note that this predjudice is still with us, albeit in a somewhat more sophisticated form, a topic which will be addressed in greater length shortly.

At this point it is sufficient to note that one fundamentally misunderstood aspect of the return is caught in the deceptively simple linguistic fact that returnees are referred to as "coming home". Going "home" is one of those shorthand conventions which describe a very complicated process in terms which conjure up images of warmth, acceptance, familiarity, scenes of reuniting, and leave no room for negativity or ambiquity. At an unconscious level it is almost as though raising questions about potential problems relating to re-entry is unnecessary due to the very nature of the behavior; or, a more serious charge, that looking for problems may create them in a self-fulfilling fashion. Both points are demonstrably false, as current research is revealing.

In the first situation, a variable proportion of returnees have always manifested some difficulty in readjusting to their natal milieu regardless of their country-of-origin or the site of their foreign experience. There are a large number of factors contributing to the severity (or lack) of the reaction such as duration, circumstances, and locale of overseas stay; degree of involvement in the foreign culture; flexibility of the individual prior to going abroad and while abroad; available support at home; and a combination of the returnees expectations and the preconceptions of those which await him or her.

The Variety of Cultural Adjustment

Thus, theories of adjustment which apply to more commonly researched topics such as immigrant assimilation, military veteran readjustment, refugee relocation, prisoner-of-war repatriation, mass migration due to political instability or wholesale natural disaster, growth and maintenance of bi- or multi-culturalism, and a host of other situations (which are characterized by culture change, conflict, or simple culture contact) should find ample and interesting opportunity for testing when applied to data from a study of the returnee process.

From this perspective, returnee studies are only one more type of adjustment which would appear as a normal and widespread phenomenon. Perhaps the study of returnees is even more urgent given the magnitude of the world-wide intercultural contacts which are destined to take place in the last fifteen years of the twentieth century. That they haven't been emphasized more may be due to the second factor mentioned above, that the person who is coming home is thought to be returning to a friendly and accepting place.

Home as a Hostile Place

In most countries, a returnee who is having noticeable problems is generally thought to be an aberrant case; exhibiting an out-of-the-ordinary and temporary malady which should remedy itself given enough time. If the behavior or attitudes of the returnee persist, then opinion quickly changes and the individual runs the very real risk of being labeled a deviant and the foreign experience being seen as the "cause" of this unhappiness. In such cases, which in their extreme manifestations are thankfully rare, the returnee may find him or herself doubly damned; first because their problems are seen as willful, a result of their refusal to act 'normal' and 'fit in' and, second, the foreign experience which the returnee may value highly is held to have 'spoiled' them in some fundamental way and is therefore discounted by others. Among school children returning from foreign educational settings this can become a classic

example of "blaming the victim".

If one is having a problem readjusting then it may be commonly held that it is the fault of the person in question and not the result of a natural, even appropriate, reaction to coming back to a culture which they find changed in ways which, for a time, they find difficult to comprehend (or, if understanding, reject aspects incompatible with their altered perspective). Coming home is not necessarily easy nor is it destined to be an insurmountable challenge, but it is certainly not as simple nor as automatic as the phrase "coming home" suggests.

Reverse Culture Shock

Just as 'culture shock', a psychological universal if there ever was one, was not a field of inquiry until Oberg gave it a label and list of symptoms in the early 1960's, so 're-entry' and 'reverse culture shock' are currently in the process of being named and the list of variables and symptomatic behaviors investigated. At this point in time there is a lot more "art" in such studies than "science" and the state of the art is formative and uncoordinated.

Recent Literature

It is only in the last decade that enough reported research has been available to make any kind of general assessment of the field of returnee studies meaningful, particularly since the number of studies in which the original thrust of the research concentrated directly on returnee adjustment are still rather limited. Prior to this there were few compilations of available resources. Fortunately, the first half of this decade saw an explosion of interest. Since 1982 a number of works have appeared which are invaluable as general orientations. Three of these which deserve special attention are Austin Church's thorough review article on "Sojourner Adjustment", in the Psychological Bulletin (Vol. 91, 1982, 540-572); Clyde Austin's annotated bibliography of nearly three hundred books and articles, Cross-Cultural Re-entry (Abeline Christian University Press, 1983); and a succinct overview by Judith Martin on "The Intercultural Reentry: Conceptualization and Directions for Future

Research", International Journal of Intercultural Relations (Vol. 8, 1984, 115-135).

Taken together they provide an excellent introduction to the definition of re-entry as a field of inquiry, the methodological approaches and research techniques currently in use, and a guide to available literature. Rather than duplicate these efforts I wish to explore three general and related questions of concern within the area of re-entry studies. First, how have re-entry studies been defined and why do they seem to have become so fashionable only recently? Second, what information are we likely to generate through the study of returnees and of what use will it be? Third, what remains to be done and what methodological approaches and research topics seem to promise the greatest return for our efforts?

Definition of the Field

Returnee studies are, as the name plainly suggest, concerned with human beings who have been away from their normal environments and are now coming back into their old cultural networks. These would include such populations as international businessmen and women, and their children, students, faculty, educational administrators, diplomats, and special groups such as Peace Corps, missionaries, military personnel, and even long term travelers. Although it is possible, and probably profitable, to extend the definition to cover certain classes of permanent immigrants and refugee cohorts if they periodically return to their native countries for stays of various lengths but retain their adopted countries as primary residence, they will not be considered here. Church, (1982) uses the term "sojourner adjustment" in much the way Siu (1952) did earlier to differentiate relatively short-term exposure (say less than five years as a rough guide) from those immigrant/refugee groups whose "cultural adjustment" (or "assimilation" in the older parlance) takes place over a much longer time, perhaps even inter-generationally. Thus, the college student who spends a year abroad or the business executive/skilled worker whose contract is

typically three-to-five years would be typical sojourners.

Acculturation vs. Re-Entry

The description of what exactly the processes should be termed is a lively and ongoing debate, but the multiple and often conflicting definitions of what 'acculturation' encompasses make it an imprecise and slippery measure of inter-cultural adaptation. Cultural adjustment is itself vague and even when further segmented into acculturation and reacculturation (i.e. adjustment overseas to a foreign culture vs. readjustment of the individual into the home culture) leave something to be desired. Opubor (n.d.) examines both resocialization and reacculturation and suggests that neither process is either descriptively accurate or particularly admirable as goals to be attained, but provocatively calls of returnees to become "responsible deviants" in both the home and host cultures. Whatever terms are utilized, it must be borne in mind that they represent little more than generalized abstractions which act more as contrast sets than actual descriptions of process or behavior.

I prefer not to use reaccultration and re-entry interchangably, although this is frequently done. Reasons for this include the fact that since acculturation is normally used to describe the adjustment of an individual to a culture very different from ones own there is a tacit metamessage in the term which implys that sojourner responses are primarily to actual cultural differences. In this view the individual is in a process of culture learning which includes language acquisition, behavioral and cognitive changes, and other activities which, however they vary from his or her prior cultural world, are undeniably recognized as new, different, and even bizarre. That is, there is little expectation that things in Tanzania or Canton will be similiar to home, if anything the problem for the sojourner in the initial entry stages will be to locate something familiar because the tendency of all newcomers to a culture is to focus on what is different (or in the case of Japan be fooled by the apparent surface Westernization and assume this reflects alterations in primordial

sentiments).

The well known "culture shock" is triggered almost in inverse proportion to the degree of difference perceived by the sojourner between the foreign culture and home. No one has ever suffered culture shock because things were too much the same overseas. It may be that acculturation may be better reserved solely to refer to adjustment to foreign cultures and use re-entry to refer to a sojourner readjustment to their own country. What happens to people in re-entry is not necessarily more complicated than the cluster of pressures which may cause a sojourner to experience some degree of culture shock, but the pressures of return are somewhat different and may be generated either from within the individual, be present in the surrounding society, or both. While culture shock has been, perhaps too neatly, packaged as coming in stages which roughly correlate with honeymoon, disorientation and culture shock, and recovery phases, re-entry has not yet been divided into discrete, sequential stages. There are probably multiple reasons for this situation, some obvious ones are that perhaps not enough detailed research has been done to delineate stages if they do exist; that 'reverse culture shock', regardless of its name, is almost surely not simply a mirror-image reflection of 'entry culture shock'; and, possibly most important, culture shock can be spectactularly obvious, characterized by withdrawal rejection of the host culture , and various acting-out behaviors. Even mild brushes with culture shock in a foreign setting can be temporarily dysfunctional to study or work. It is acceptable (within limits), considered normal, and so well known that overseas directors, peer students or workers, and foreign administrators and counselors usually have experience in dealing with sojourner culture shock, at least to the extent it is recognized as "a phase of adjustment" rather than a more serious mental breakdown. Hence phases for culture shock, and a 'process' for re-entry, at least for the present time. Re-entry is not reacculturation because it is not a simple readaptation or resumption of an old mode of living. Or to put it another, more negative way,

if re-entry is simply a reacculturation or readaptation of earlier patterns to thought and behavior, what was the purpose of the overseas experience in the first place? Alternate conceptions of adaptation have been offered such as Lifton's chameleon-like creature the "Protean Man," who shares some features of David Reisman's 'other-directed' personality type or the 'internationalized' individual who wears cultural repitoires like so many costumes in a world stage play. Neither of these types seem likely candidates for re-entry shock, at least in their idealized (and probably never realized) forms. But for the proverbial average sojourner, a re-entry is not a return to normal, or at least not in the usual sense of a resumption of earlier goals, values, and perspectives. A crucial difference between entry and reverse culture shock is that the re-entry process has only recently been identified as a potential problem of some magnitude. Reverse culture shock is seldom recognized per se by family and friends of the returnee. Behavior associated with it is often held unacceptable, not normal, and seldom engenders any sympathy or understanding. A common reaction is, "Why should you be having any problems...you're home!" The underlying reason why a person sometimes experiences difficulty readjusting is precisely that they do not feel normal, nor may they necessarily desire to resume a condition of existence which they left.

It is at this point that recent theoretical work (Adler, 1976, among others) intersects with patterns of readaptation or reentry, specifically where the emphasis is on the individual's quality of re-entry and the degree to which they can successfully integrate their overseas experiences with on-going activities as part of the re-entry process. Adler's characterization of re-entry as potentially "growthful" is one of the few studies which have looked beyond the initial readjustment problems to discuss readaptation stratagies and their possible consequences for the individual.

Re-Entry as Learning Experience

Which brings us to what should be at least some of the major motivations for undertaking re-entry research; what can be discovered and understood about the re-entry process which will assist the personal growth and development of the returnee while preserving their new cultural knowledge and expanded international background? How can cross-cultural trainers assist re-entry and functioning within the returnee's home culture while retaining those elements which make their experiences unique and personally satisfying? It has been demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that while orientation programs may not prevent culture shock, a competent training curriculum can at least help a person recognize the symptoms and lessen the negative impact. Culture shock, properly handled, can lead to growth and self-understanding. So can reverse culture shock, as one type of stressful transition experience, be turned into a learning experience. While not detracting from the unique aspects of re-entry as a process, it should be noted that there are many stressful transition experiences over one's lifetime. They can range from birth of a sibling, or first day at school, marriage, and the crises of divorce or death of a loved one. While most or all of these occur within a single cultural matrix for nearly everyone, the re-entry is complicated by the fact that preceeding return the individual has been immersed in another culture. The returnee is put in the position of having not only to deal with the immediate fact of re-entry but may also be struggling to make some sense out of the society just exited. That 'home' may have changed simply adds more ingredients which must be accounted for in the physical and psychological readjustment.

Factors in Adjustment

Depending upon how you want to divide the entire event from the decision to go abroad through re-entry, the number of variables which might be applicable to how well a person 'adjusts' (in a foreign country or coming home) is probably nearly incalcuable, since some kind of case could be made from everything from

pre-natal exposure through toilet-training and general personality as formative influences leading to patterns of behavior and thought. However, as a practical matter some variables (studies generally contain from a dozen to triple that number) appear to have direct and even measurable effects. Church summarized predictive indices based on background and demographic characteristics, listing the most studied as nationality, status, language proficiency, age, educational level, and previous cross-cultural experience. In essence, what we currently have are lists, some elements of which (overseas living conditions for example) appear as critical variables. To date, there is no hierarchy of variables in re-entry comparable to Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs'. There is no question that sex, age at time of experience, educational achievement level, country-of-origin, choice of host country and amount of previous cross-cultural exposure (including prior re-entry) produce their own specific adjustment trajectories. Exactly how, we can't predict in any precise way, or at least not in any way which can be used to pinpoint specific adjustment problems for individuals. For example, an American woman college student of twenty from a liberal, lower-middle-class Italian Cathoic background will probably have greater difficulty adjusting to Saudi Arabian culture than a thirty-five year old American business executive from a wealthy, conservative Methodist background. But only in <u>general</u>. In any <u>specific</u> instance the mix of factors is so potentially large and complicated that, theoretically speaking, we must for the present be content to analyze from <u>post-facto</u> accounts the success or failure of any particular sojourn. The work lies in building up models for adjustment which reflect a variety of kinds of people in an equally diverse number of settings. How to exactly weigh them either subjectively or mathematically has yet to be determined. We still rely heavily upon the self-reportage of the individual even where some objective testing method is available, such as language proficiency level. It is axiomatic that while self-assessment is a valuable tool yielding important data, such statements may

be guided by personal agendas and skewed through selective memory or outright fabrication. Like the rest of social sciences, we are stuck with imperfect methods and informants of variable reliability.

Although it is undeniable that the cumulative experiences undergone while adjusting to a foreign culture will have carryover effects during the re-entry process, it is also logical that certain of these will be of greater relative importance. Research with foreign student populations, Peace Corps, and American student returnees all suggest that location and duration of sojourn, degree and type of interaction with foreign nationals, and level of adjustment in the host country are all key variables. They are certainly interrelated, although at this time we lack a sufficient data base to do sophisticated analyses. A study by Torbiorn (1982) of corporate personnel abroad examined thirty variables affecting their adjustment, but inspite of this large number, concluded that even considering them together that, at best, 25% to 50% of the variance in satisfaction could be explained. The special nature of the corporate overseas worker with their task-orientation, status, and relatively insulated levels of contact with host nationals make it doubtful that these results can be extrapolated to other cohorts such as students.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Current Research Weaknesses

Having given the return process a name (re-entry), and given the difficulties encountered a title (reverse culture shock), and listed the prime contributory variables (e.g., expectations at odds with reality) what remains to be done? Actually, everything! Beginning as early as the late 1960's there have been criticisms of the methods employed in cross-cultural adjustment research and a strong skepticism of the applicability of many studies beyond their own narrow base. Weak areas identified by Church are:

a. Frequent overgeneralization from limited sample sizes and national groups.

b. Predominance of studies dealing with American sojourners or persons from other cultures sojourning in the United States.

c. An absence of studies comparing the adjustment process of particular national groups in different host countries (multiple sites).

d. Lack of international collaboration by both home and host culture scientists in studies of adjustment from both perspectives.

e. Absence of baseline data or adequate control groups. (Who is typical? How to separate sojourner outcomes due to attitude change from those resulting from normal maturational processes?)

f. Lack of differentiation of cultures as 'easier' or 'tougher', not in relative terms, but absolutely (perhaps related to their distinct ecological and social evolution or levels of stress within the society itself for natives and visitors alike).

g. Absence of studies directly correlating adjustment where the cultural differences are in bi-polar opposition, such as difficulty of going from a more developed nation to a less developed, a more hierarchical system to a more egalitarian one, a class to a caste society, a strongly differentiated culture to a less differentiated, or a socially restrictive society to a more open one, and vice-versa.

h. Need for use of multiple methods for individual studies to lend depth and breadth to the correlations, particularly since any index of adjustment will not covary substantially.

No Quick Fix

The remedies for these weaknesses vary greatly. For example, over-generalization from limited sample is easily corrected either by the author making explicit the scope of his research and sample size of his population, increasing of sample sizes, or by increased skepticism on the part of the reader. Cosmic implications for cross-cultural research are not built upon an N of 40, however provocative and interesting the results may be. The cry of "further research" and the promotion of bi-national research teams would go a long way to balance the quantitative predominance of American/Western sojourner studies in the literature, but to operationalize these a degree of cooperation and a level of funding which is currently unrealized would need to be implemented. Moreover, quality is much more the issue than quantity. Poorer nations send many of their best and brightest to developed nations even though

they certainly wish this situation was not necessary. The burden of sponsoring these students is so great that it is all the educational fundations and governments can do to support these exchanges. Studies which seem as abstract as 'sojourner adjustment' or, even more ambiguous, 'returnee studies' are unlikely to gather necessary institutional support unless the 'drop-out' rates are excessive or the potential 'returnees' fail to return. I suspect that a significant percentage of the so-called Brain Drain is attributable to difficulties in the cultural sphere experienced by highly-trained third world nationals who find readjustment at home to be a much larger dilemma than they, or their governments, anticipated. Low salary compensation, poor laboratory or professional equipment availability, questions of status, and many of the other examples what I would term 'external' considerations, are often cited as the prime reasons for turning expatriate. I submit that the inability or unwillingness to readjust to social and cultural dimensions may be equal, although hidden, factors. Until a situation reaches crisis proportions a country may be unwilling to commit time and resources to the study of re-entry and its consequences.

This is not limited to developing countries. Japan has recently realized that one of the unintended and undesired by-products of the internationalization of its economy is the problem of reintegrating its students, corporate executives (and their spouses and children), and others who live, study, or work abroad for substantial periods of time. Once limited to discussions of the kikokushijo (returning students) and how to yearly fit 7000-8000 of them back into the appropriate social and educational mold, the concern has been broadened to include the misfit salaryman back from Los Angeles and the college student whose year-abroad causes programatic, academic, and social re-entry difficulties. Many of the current re-entry studies being undertaken in Japan and among Japanese residing outside the country are supported by major Japanese corporations through governmental ministries in

Tokyo and institutions (such as the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka) as well as national and regional universities. But it didn't become a subject for research until it was publically acknowledged as cause for national concern[3]. Few developing countries can afford such efforts regardless of the severity of the problem.

Even where studies of this type are being done they are most often based on survey questionnaires or 'problem checklists'. As a starting point these are traditional and useful ways to obtain general indications and pinpoint constellations of factors which merit further research, but they are not a substitute for in-depth interviews, case studies of successful adaptations (or spectacular failures), participant-observation in formal settings (e.g. classrooms or offices) and informal loci (e.g. at home, recreational activities, etc.), or unobtrusive measures. All of which are designed to amplify (and often correct) initial impressions gleaned from questionnaires. To understand the individual in anything approaching a wholistic sense it is necessary to place the individual returnee into a specific context and understand their reactions to it, but it is also imperative to simultaneously understand the overall configuration of the culture into which the returnees re-enter. All this takes time, patience, perseverance, empathy, and a degree of cooperation from all concerned.

In short, if the prevailing view of the home culture is that there are no re-entry problems because its returning citizens are loyal, dedicated, nationalistic, already well-adjusted people who are just coming home, the researcher is unlikely to get much official support (or even a visa in some cases). In certain very conservative and hierarchical societies it is not uncommon for any overt signs of reverse culture shock to be taken for disloyalty, subversion, or even mental incompetance. One reason why pre-reentry orientations offered to foreign students in the United States have historically had a poor reception by those students either is that they categorically deny

that there could possibly be a problem or, admitting that some inner or outer conflict might occur, feel that to admit it to a foreign student advisor would somehow reflect negatively on their country. At the same time to discuss it with their peers present would reveal weakness. The sad and bewildered letters which sometimes are addressed to their Ameican friends or advisors after their return are a testimony to how thin the facade presented prior to re-entry really was. Some bear it in silence and isolation, some leave and go abroad for work or further study, and some work it through and eventually achieve a satisfactory readjustment through various techniques ranging from compartmentalization to active integration.

Team Approaches

Ideally, simultaneous investigations of sojourner adjustment and re-entry phases by teams of at least pairs of researchers, one from each country working with roughly matched sample populations over the same time span, would go a long way to further comparative adjustment studies, particularly if it can be arranged for the investigators to exchange places for a period of time or sequentially visit each others research site. Such joint ventures might lessen resistence to view adjustment difficulties as idiosyncratic (or worse of all 'failures of national character') and take some of the negative implications out of discussing problems of readjustment since both sides are equally 'host' and 'home' to their respective populations. I suspect that more commonalities may emerge than divergence. Hopefully, what differences in adaption styles and strategies do exist will be able to be viewed objectively as variations on a common human theme and not as deficiencies of anyone's culture or character.

What Now?

The work has only begun. Implications for the future are enormous, not only statistically but internationally. In the 1983-84 academic year an all-time high of 338,894 foreign students studied in American colleges and universities. Lead by Taiwan, Iran, Nigeria and Malaysia, over 180 countries

sent their intellactual legacy to us so that we might continue their education. Some of our technical departments consist of up to 20% foreign enrollment (e.g. engineering). We reciprocated by sending at least 30,000 Americans on formal programs (perhaps as many as 100,000 part-time and independents) Americans to over 80 countries for education above the secondary level. World-wide the exchange of persons in the educational field alone is staggering. What they learn from each other in the technological sphere is important, but what we learn from other's cultures, how we learn it, and what we do with it when we return home is crucial. Reentry adjustment is a key to that process. If we go abroad and never return to our native lands we can play no active role as a cultural mediator, teaching nothing to others about our experience. If we never go abroad we will never know what we are missing... good or bad. If we want to return to our native lands, but wish to bring something more than we left with, be something more than we were, but our culture will not accept it, or us, we both lose. Just as cultural adjustment studies can help everyone find ways to enhance the overseas sojourn, cope with culture shock, and learn in cross-cultural situations, re-entry studies can assist the transition back home by informing the returnee of what to expect, explaining why reverse culture shock occurs and how to deal with it, and simultaneously make those at home more aware of and sympathetic to the readjustment process of its returning sojourners.

Bringing the Whole Person Back

A final word is appropriate here about the curious imbalance between the proliferation of orientation programs and the lack of reentry seminars. The educational establishment has long held that sending a young man or woman abroad is an excellent way of broadening their world-view and challenging their values. When a cross-cultural journey consisted of a walking tour of the Continent, say France, Italy, and Germany, or a year in Spain at the Prado, perhaps a re-entry was not strictly necessary. Today our approach to international education is

far more interactive and likely to find a substantial proportion of our students in ecological and cultural environments far removed from their backgrounds, speaking Hindi or Bahasa Indonesia, observing Buddhist or Moslem, or animistic rites, eating "things" unknown, and generally having the hell shaken out of their assumptive worlds. Living with the Masai herders, Amazonian indios, Nepali wheat farmers, or Japanese orange growers is guaranteed to give the average American college student pause for thought. So we provide some kind of orientation out of a sense of duty or at least as an anxiety-reducing activity. When these same students come back "home" we have assumed that they will somehow find the emotional, personal resources to not only get on with their academic program and extracurricular life, but will also devise ways to integrate the new information and language skills into their course work and daily activities. To a large extent they are abandoned to their own devices. I personally find this irresponsible and unnecessary. With the exception of language majors for whom the sojourn may be simply a living laboratory extension of their prior studies, most students have no easy or obvious way to meld their experiential learning with their text-oriented courses. Seldom do they have a ready made network of supportive peers who truly comprehend the nature of the cross-cultural experience and can offer good advice and a patient ear. Those with few or mild problems with readjustment will usually recover within a few months or a year at most. Others with more difficult symptoms may find the cumulative pressures too great and drop out or limp along doing minimal work, performing at a level far below their potential or past efforts. Having dealt with the entire question of the linking of orientation and re-entry elsewhere[4], I will summarize my assessment of the place re-entry seminars or courses in this way... <u>any experience which is sufficiently out-of-the-ordinary as to require serious advance planning and orientation is, by definition, sufficiently worthy of an equal period of debriefing and serious reflection.</u> To prepare students for an overseas sojourn, plunge them into a new and foreign setting, and then greet

them upon their return with a "welcome back" or a perfunctory "well, how was Zambia", is insufficient and unworthy of the institution which sent them abroad in the first place. Anything worth doing is worth doing well... and completely. Re-entry adjustment studies are in that category and so is offering the returnee a supportive forum for their feelings, a place to exchange ideas and information, a set of models for their consideration, the opportunity to place their personal experiential sojourn into even larger cross-cultural, global contexts, and provide guides on how to integrate the unique and singular events of the foreign period into more mundane pursuits such as term papers or perhaps even post-graduate employment. For all these reasons, re-entry studies are important because it is from these discrete research efforts that the necessary theory will be generated and pragmatic applications will be developed. On all counts, it is a worthy preoccupation, and for some of us, an obsession.

A Final Caution

Although it would be nice if all cross-cultural encounters increased understanding and all re-entrys resulted in more self-knowledge and sensitivity, this is unlikely. Re-entry studies will also inevitably reveal many instances where the overseas sojourn results in a deep entrenchment of already existing ethnocentric ideas and values. Furthermore, there will be situations where contact with a foreign culture is so unsettling for the individual that while they do not actively dislike the people they never comprehend the ethos of the culture in any meaningful way and gratefully return home, treating home as a sanctuary which they will never voluntarily leave again.

There is even a curious kind of what I have decribed elsewhere as 'dual ethnocentrism' which arises from the pseudo-schizophrenic stance a sojourner often find themselves forced to maintain; specifically, being called upon to defend their country and its policies while abroad and then returning home and being obliged to defend the host country to friends and acquaintances. Finally,

another negative possible outcome of a trip overseas, particularly to a country which has been held in the traveler's mind to be romantic and exotic, is a thorough-going disillusionment leading to varying degrees of rejection and withdrawal while in the culture and overall disappointment with the sojourn upon re-entry.

That such reactions arise is not surprising or necessarily bad. It depends upon whether the situations can be used as starting points for further change or if people become stuck in that mental mode. "Dual ethnocentrism," for example, appears to be a relatively short-lived phenomenon which fades over time as the sojourner becomes less defensive in his home culture and has no long-lasting effects. In the same way, if a student discovers that his half-formed conceptions or idealized images of a country are neither correct nor sufficient, this realization can be used to introduce a little 'reality therapy' upon the return home. Even a sojourn which was difficult and frustrating for the individual can be put to good use in retrospect. To a degree, a 'bad' trip can still lead to a thoughtful and more objective post-experience learning period. With proper guidance and support, a negative overseas experience can be turned into an opportunity for serious analysis and fruitful cross-cultural comparison, without dwelling on the less successful aspects of the trip.

However, there will probably always be hard cases which are not amenable to alteration. Some minds, once made up, have an infinite capacity to resist intrusion of alternative views. For this tiny minority, the overseas experience is either genuinely incomprehensible or reprehensible, and nothing short of a lobotomy will alter that opinion. The only consolation for the cross-cultural trainer in such cases is the realization that such people usually don't have much of a problem with re-entry, in part because they never mentally left their own culture. For these few, enculturation seems to be the definitive and terminal adjustment period in their lives; acculturation to any significant degree being beyond them psychologically or physically. They experience neither

resocialization or readjustment upon return, but, then again, neither are they alienated from their own society (likely rejoining their own narrow support group be it religious, ethnic, social, or occupational).

Re-entry studies will eventually progress to the point where in addition to cataloging these maladaptive or non-adaptive responses, there will emerge ways to deal with them, either upon return or as part of a pre-entry orientation. However, it is clear that without some type of post-return counseling, seminar, debriefing, or analysis, many people who might otherwise benefit (perhaps in unexpected ways) from a painful or mediocre experience will be left without a clue as to what went wrong, why certain things occurred, and how to prevent them in the future. It's not a panacea, but it is a logical and reasonable step in the continuing evolution of techniques to assist people to come to terms with cross-cultural encounters, abroad and at home.

NOTES

1. Enormous resources are available in literature for introducing students to important topics and issues relating to culture learning, cross-cultural communication, and culture conflict. For example, the problems of re-entry can be gleaned from Homer's Odyssey, Henry Jones' The American and The Europeans, the poetry of T. S. Eliot, and literally hundreds of others (Thomas Wolfe, James Baldwin, etc.). From Africa there is Ngugi's A Grain of Wheat and Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, from Japan Soseki's Kokoru. Lincoln Blake of Earlham College offers an entire class, "Innocent Abroad: Literature and the Cross Cultural Experience," from this perspective, James Spradley and George McDonough's edited reader Anthropology Through Literature (Little, Brown, 1973) contains many useful readings including Victor Barnouw on India, Lawrence Durrell on Cyprus, Hans Reusch of Polar Eskimos, and several dozen more. The writings of anthropologists such as Claude Levi Strauss (Triste Tropiques), Jean Briggs (Never in Anger), Elizabeth Ferena (Guests of the Sheik), and Peter Freuchen on the Eskimos are all superb.
   The power of the re-entry experience to transcend boundaries of language and culture can be seen in the following quote from a recent translation of Swedish writer Artur Lundkvist from his Transemotional Sketches:

> Each time you leave a town, half consciously never to return, it seems to crumble behind you, turning into ruins sometimes rapidly sometimes slowly,
>
> each time you travel homewards, towards north, it is farewell to the southern parts, to all the foreign things you leave behind, with some regret and sadness,
>
> each time the train brings you back to where you belonged, it is a mixture of homish and alien feelings that greet you, facing you out of the falling rain which stripes the landscape in dense strokes,
>
> each time it is the deeper green or the already snow-covered grown so familiar although for some time you were not reminded of them,
>
> each time you come up to this different climate it seems that doors were closed behind, that thresholds were passed, stone fields closed up and the churches with pointed towers drew nearer,
>
> each time desolateness spreads, the sparsely populated loneliness, the greater equality between animals and men, the small forest roads going in amongst the trees and disappearing.
>
> each time you come back something seems to have been faithfully waiting for you, patiently and indulgently like an old-fashioned fiancee, who is once more willing to receive you and take you in her arms,
>
> and each time you feel your insufficiency, your treacherousness, almost as if you were a disguised stranger with stolen name and a forged dentiny —
>
> Sinnebilder pp. 5-6 tr. Kerstin Vidaeus

2. The author has dealt with this in a recent article, "The Re-Entry Process as a Cultural Universal and the Status of 'Returnee' Studies in Japan," in Meta Report XI: Ibasho Sagashi to Ibunka-Taiken (The Identity Search and Cross-Cultural Experience), N. Horoiwa and T. Nakazawa, (eds.), Meta Culture no Kai (Meta Press), Tokyo, 1984, pp. 73-89.

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3. The evolution of the kikokushijo mondai (returned student problem) in Japan is traced in a paper, "Kikokushijo: The Emergence and Institutionalization of an 'Educational Problem' in Japan," Kitsuse, Murase, and Yamamura, mss. 37 pp., n.d.

4. See the authors Orientation as Process: The Integration of Pre- and Post-Experience Learning, delivered to the Thirty-Seventh Annual Conference of the Council on International Educational Exchange (Cross-Cultural Orientation Seminar), Minneapolis, October 31-November 3, 1984.

Sample course syllabi are attached in Appendix 1.

APPENDIX

AIS 151 Cross-Cultural Orientation
B. LaBrack
Spring 1984
Wednesday 7-10 (March 14-April 25)
Bechtel International Center

This course is designed for students planning to study abroad. In order to get the most of the experience abroad, it is crucial that you prepare yourself both emotionally and intellectually for that experience, that you have some idea of what to expect both in opportunities and in problems, that you develop some skills in cross-cultural observation and communication, that you learn something about the culture in which you are about to be immersed as well as think seriously about the one from which you will be emerging. In this course you will do so through reading, writing, group interaction, cross-cultural simulations, and discussion with others who have preceded you. Let me emphasize that our experience shows a positive correlation between those who take seriously a rigorous orientation program and the amount learned, the personal growth achieved, while you are abroad.

This is a two unit course. You can therefore expect, because it is taught for only one-half of the semester, that the work load will be similar to any other four-unit course at UOP, but only for seven weeks. Attendance is required. The only permitted absence will be due to illness. You must have a doctor's letter to prove it. In that case, you will have to make up the work in a way to be determined in consultation with me.

Grades will be based on the quality of your participation in the discussion of assignments and on the quality of your written work: There will be five written assignments of a minimum of five pages (typed, double-spaced). Any paper which is not turned in on time will automatically mean an extra paper assignment in addition to a penalty on the grade. Any paper less than five pages will be returned for rewriting.

The following books are in the book store (in the Sociology section) and should be purchased:

Robert Kohls, Survival Kit for Overseas Living
Smith and Luce, Toward Internationalism
Charles Vetter, Citizen Ambassadors

14 March: On going abroad. Your motivations, fears, hopes. Discussion with returnees. Where to get information. What going abroad is all about.

Assignment for next week: Kohls, chapters 1-7, Appendix A, (In these and other chapters, do the exercises); Luce and Smith, articles by Condon, Hall. On reserve: Kleinjans, "On Cultural Learning", Linton, "100% American".
Paper Topic #1: "My Goals in Going Abroad and How I Plan to Reach Them."

21 March: What is the nature of culture and how is it learned?

Assignment for next week: Kohls, chapters 8-9; Luce and Smith, articles by Stewart, Miner. On reserve: Kluckholm, "American Values", Lynd, "American Cultural Values."
Paper Topic #2: Answer as many questions (at least ten) in Kohl's Appendix C (The "Grandparents Exercises") as you can in five pages. Write a critique and grade another student's

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first paper from the first week.
Value Clarification Exercise: Alligator River

28 March: Where you are coming from. A discussion of American culture and values, the assumptions and attitudes you will take with you. Discussion with foreign students and their perceptions of your culture.

Assignment for next week: Kohls, chapters 13-15. On reserve: Hall and Whyte, "Intercultural Communication." Paper Topic #3: in four pages, answer as many questions (at least 5) from Kohl's chapter 14 as you can from your own knowledge. Compile a one-page bibliography of sources of information on the country you will be visiting. (Keep an extra copy of the bibliography for yourself). Use these sources for information to complete the four pages of answers if you need to. People you might talk to on the staff are listed in the International Resources Directory in the two Bechtel International Center offices.

4 April: Bafa Bafa. A simulation of the cross-cultural experience and its challenges. Discussion of Hall and Whyte.

Assignment for next week: Kohls, chapters 10-12, 16-21; Luce and Smith, articles by Oberg, Hanvey, Szalay, Schnapper, Gordon. Paper topic #4: in five pages, answer at least 5 more questions from chapter 14 in Kohls based on research using your sources from last week's bibliography.

11 April: On ethnocentricity, cross-cultural communication, culture shock, and learning to live with "the others."

Assignment for next week: Vetter, all. Paper topic #5: Vetter's chapter one has 60 questions. Before reading the rest of the book, answer one question from each of the four sections in your own words. Then read the whole book. Now, conclude the paper by saying what you might say differently now that you have caught on to the appropriate style of communication.

18 April: On not being an ugly, ill-informed American. Discussion of Vetter, ways to become better informed about the U.S. before you leave.

25 April: Final questions and worries, nuts and bolts. Group discussions on the countries and programs you are going to with returnees and other resource persons. Course Evaluation.

The University Honor Code is an essential element in academic integrity. It is a violation of the honor code to give or receive information from another student during an examination; to use unauthorized sources during an examination; or to submit all or part of someone else's work or ideas as one's own. If a student violates the Honor Code, the faculty member may refer the matter to the Office of Student Life. If found guilty, the student may be penalized with failure of the assignment or failure of the course. The student may also be reprimanded or suspended from the University. A complete statement of the Honor Code may be found in the Student Handbook, Tiger Lore.

BLB:tk
2/7/84

Bruce La Brack
WPC 105
Fall Semester 1984

AIS 161
Tuesday, 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Room: Bechtel Int'l Center

RE-ENTRY SEMINAR

This is a course for those recently returned from study outside the United States. It is specifically designed to assist people in coming to terms, emotionally and intellectually with the pleasure and pain of participating in other cultures and, perhaps even more to the point, "coming home". The intense experiences one undergoes in a foreign country may seem unique to the individual; however pyschologically and anthropologically they are analyzable in terms of cultural and mental patterns. The course seeks to view the role of the sojourner in a much wider framework and to help the student place his or her subjective experiences into a variety of more universal models and perspectives. Ultimately, the goal of the course is to give students the opportunity to integrate their feelings and newly gained cultural and linguistic skills with their ongoing academic studies and to make the transitional period as "growthful" as possible.

Consideration will be given to how perceptions are created, how values systems are modified, replaced, or accompanied by parallel (but different) values, and how the intercultural processes affect identity and behavior. Specifically, we will deal with the phenomenon of culture shock (going and returning), the notion of "integration" of cultures and ideational systems, communication difficulties (linguistic/kinesic), and the extent to which we are able to harmonize our personal lives while appreciating the diversity of manners and morals. More than any other course you have taken, "success" will have to be judged on an individual basis as there is no known, reliable index of post-experience adjustment other than action and attitudes of the returnee. Therefore, the course will involve a mirroring process whereby students will be given various perspectives from which to evaluate and analyze their time abroad.

However, as this is a two-unit credit course you are expected to give the same time and effort necessary in any more traditional academic course. Since we meet only eight times (3 hours per seminar), the reading and work load will equal that of a standard four unit course for two months. Plan accordingly.

There are five requirements:

1. Attendance at all sessions and participation. One absence could mean no credit. This is not primarily a lecture course. It will involve dialectics, dialogue, participation, discussion and mutual teaching/learning. We will all be involved in an attempt to discover what happened not only to us individually but what that cross-cultural exposure does to everyone and the processes which we can recognize and describe as "normal." Failure to attend and participate would be, as Sarte would say, "bad faith."

2. Purchase and read carefully four books:

   Available from UOP Bookstore:

   Never in Anger - Jean Briggs. (discussion scheduled for Oct. 23)

   Survival Kit for Overseas Living - C. Robert Kohls

   American Culture Patterns - Edward Stewart

   Available from Office of International Programs:

   The Return Home: A Re-entry Reader - La Brack

3. Articles to be read as per attached syllabi...BEFORE CLASS. Most available in my reader The Return Home. Copies may be obtained from the staff of the Office of International Programs, Bechtel Center. A few readings will be distributed in class the week before they are due and other materials may be put on reserve in the Martin Library.

4. One major paper of a minimum of twenty well-reasoned, carefully crafted pages of personal analysis and reflection. Examples from past seminars will be available in the reserve room of the Martin Library sometime in early November. Final paper to be turned in no later than Monday, November 26.

5. "Reaction Papers" will be assigned each class and are due the following week. No extensions, no makeups, no excuses.

August 28: ORGANIZATION! Formation of class. Discussion of objectives, personal goals, format, etc.

October 2: WHAT IS RE-ENTRY?...or "you may or may not be able to go home again?"

Focus Questions: How is re-entry different, if at all, from "entry", or initial culture contact?

Is there such a thing as "reverse" culture shock?

If so, what are the main causes (personal) and how does it show up (processes/attitudes)?

Why do you do what you do (out of fear, respect, habit, love, don't know)?

READINGS - Section 1 in The Return Home, articles by Werkman and Wallach

ASSIGNMENT - Two typewritten pages dealing with: 1) What you think you gained from being overseas, 2) How do I know that? Why is the experience important to you, if indeed it is?

Handout: "Body Ritual Among the Nacirima", by Horace Miner

October 9: OVERTHERE: Where were you and what did you expect?

Focus Questions: Is going abroad possible in the sense of gaining native experience or is it really tourism?

How do ones' cultural values condition the experience?

What does it mean to become more "objective" about a culture?

Would it matter which country you went to? Which one you were from? Why?

What is "cultural relativity" and what is its relevance, if any, to the international traveler? Limitations? Usefulness as a philosophic stance?

READINGS - Section 2 in The Return Home, article by Wellman

American Cultural Patterns - by Edward Stewart (selected portions TBA)

Handouts: "American Values" by Clyde Kluckhohn, "American Cultural Values: Contradiction and Integration" by Lynd

ASSIGNMENT: Prepare your own list of "typical American traits" (at least twenty) and then note any major differences you see between that list and your own beliefs or behavior.

October 16: CROSS-CULTURAL DILEMMAS: Gains and Losses

Focus Questions: Identity: Who am I? (How many of "me" are there?)

What does one "gain" from living and studying abroad?

Is anything lost?

Has your "identity" changed, suffered, expanded, gotten lost?

Was it worth it? Why?

Cognitive learning centers on knowing (intellectual) and affective (feelings/attitudes) on emotional reactions -- are they really different? How?

Can you feel something without understanding it? What about the reverse?

READING - All of Never in Anger, by Jean Briggs

October 23: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BECOME INTERNATIONAL?

Focus Questions: Is it possible to really become part of another very different culture and society?

Is the foreigner always just an "adopted child" or a "guest"?

What good is understanding other cultures? Who benefits? You? Them? How?

Are global economic and political ties leading to mutual understanding or is "to know them is to loathe them"?

What are some potential results of exposure to different cultures (alienation, marginality, bi-culturality, protean responses, internationalization?

READINGS - Section 4 in The Return Home, articles by Lifton, N. Adler.

Handout: David Riesman on 'inner' and 'other' directed personality.

ASSIGNMENT: Prepare a three page paper telling why you fit into one of Adler's three categories of adjustment strategy or why you don't feel any one of them describe your situation.

October 30: WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE...WHO DO THEY THINK YOU ARE?

Focus Questions: What is your social, personal, sexual, political, national, ethnic, economic, and religious identity?

Does your self-image always agree with the evaluations of others (friends, family, strangers)?

Is the idea of "self" a cultural or universal concept?

How is the re-entry process affected by the attitudes of the receiving society? Does this make any difference?

READINGS: Section 5 in The Return Home, articles by Boakari, Bristlin, La Brack

ASSIGNMENT: Bring a list of at least ten adjectives, statements, or values/attitudes which describe you best. Who are you?

Handout: "Foreign Student Observations"

November 6: RE-ENTRY AS METAPHOR: Integration and Growth

Focus Questions: Shocks (cultural, re-entry, electrical) can be painful and difficult. What can we learn from the process of working through their causes and understanding their sources?

Can post-experience growth equal or exceed that of the overseas experience itself? Or is it simply cognitive reflection?

Is re-entry just another "stage-of-development" in a series of life adjustments (adolesence, college independence, marriage, etc.) or is it qualitatively different? If so, how?

READINGS: Section 6 in The Return Home, articles by Opubor, P. Adler, Bochner, La Brack.

ASSIGNMENT: Two page, typed, analysis of Survival Kit by Kohls. Details in class.

November 13: THE FUTURE: TRANSITIONS, GOALS, AND AWARENESS

Focus Questions: What should be done to lessen or prevent re-entry shock? Should nothing be done?

What can be done to assist Americans coming home and would the same ideas, counseling, materials, or support be applicable cross-culturally? Examples?

If going abroad changes ones perspective what is the revised vision going to look like? What does it mean to have a "global" awareness?

Isn't "cultural chauvinism" also a possible response?

Is an enalarged world view a burden or a responsibility?

READINGS: Section 7 in The Return Home, articles by P. Adler, Knepler, Hanvey.

ASSIGNMENT: Critically analyze the course syllabus, readings, and course content, suggesting changes which in your opinion would make it more relevant, effective, or interesting.